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STANFIELD HALL.

By J. F. SMITH,

Author of "Minnigrey," "Woman and Her Master," &c.



Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT, R.A.
AND OTHER EMINENT ARTISTS.

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VOL. III.



[RECEPTION OF CHARLES I. AT OXFORD.]

STANFIELD HALL.

the quivering jaw, or breaking in upon the seat of life through the portal of the temples.

"A petard!" shouted Barford, furiously. "Let us enlarge the breach, and then——"

"All is over," said Martin to himself; "I trust to Heaven my master and his daughter have escaped."

During the attack, the women on the tower—for women—had been remarkably quiet; and, strange to say, they had been occupied neither in scandal nor mischief; on the contrary, eager to repair the error they had involuntarily committed, they had, with the skirts of their strong linen gowns, handkerchiefs, and wimples, formed a species of rope, reaching from the summit of the tower nearly to the leads.

"Martin!" they cried; "here, here—see here!"

The despairing man turned his head, and comprehended with a glance that there was hope still. He was obliged to calculate his opportunity to the second. Should one of his assailants reach the platform while he remained dangling in the air, he would but present a fairer aim; he resolved, therefore, to await the firing of the petard, which he could distinctly hear being fixed to the little penthouse-like door he had so gallantly defended, and escape, if possible, in the smoke and confusion.

Hiss, hiss, like a serpent uncoiling itself, went the fusee. Martin heard it.

"Back, back!" muttered Barford.

"Now is my time," said the old man, throwing down the shattered weapon, which had done such good service, and rushing to the frail species of rope which a dozen hands let down to him.

Just as he reached it, bang went the petard—the explosion took place. The great danger was lest the women in their fright, should let go their hold. Fortunately, they did not, and Martin reached the top in safety before the smoke had sufficiently cleared away to admit of his enemies perceiving him.

Great was the disappointment of the Roundheads when they found their prey had escaped them; for all within the tower were, at least for the present, beyond their reach. Artillery alone, or famine, could reduce them. Barford rushed from the leads in a state of madness, foaming with hate and curses.

"Escaped!" he muttered; "the prize for which I toiled escaped!"

"Not so," exclaimed the almost breathless Gobmouth, who, our readers may remember, took to his heels on the first discharge of old Martin's gun. He had concealed himself in the wood, and judging, from the sight of Sir Malcolm and his daughter flying through its mazes, the true state of affairs at the mansion, had ventured forth.

"What mean you?" demanded Barford.

"The old malignant and his daughter are in the wood."

The words had scarcely passed the speaker's lips than the overjoyed Barford started off in the direction he pointed to, leaving the man of piety to join in the plunder of the house.

It was in a long, narrow dell, through an opening of which Keinton Manor was distinctly visible, that the fiery Puritan overtook his prey. Mary was too terrified to shriek, but the silent agony of her eye, fixed, as it were, by a species of fascination, upon his, told the contest between life and terror which struggled at her heart.

"Fly," said the old knight, drawing his sword; "fly, Mary, if you love your father or value his dying blessing! Leave me to settle with this pious knave: this burglar who apes the soldier and shames the man."

But Mary could not fly and leave her father at Barford's mercy.

The contest was a short one. Sir Malcolm, severely wounded in the sword-arm, slipped and fell. The conqueror seized his prize, and for the first time broke silence:

"Mine—mine at last," he murmured, as his eager eyes scanned her trembling form. "I have dreamed of this hour, prayed for it, sinned for it, and it has dawned."

"Mercy, mercy!" shrieked the maiden.

"Mercy," repeated the Puritan, in a mocking tone, "the same which you showed me when I knelt and sued to your proud beauty."

Throwing his arms round her waist, he would have dragged her from the spot, despite her shrieks and frantic cries, had not a fourth party appeared, dashing like a madman, sword in hand, through the underwood. It was the Master of Wilton, who fortunately arrived in time to defeat the design of the ravisher. With the pommel of his sword he struck Barford so violent a blow in the chest that he was forced to release his prey, who sank, half-fainting, into the arms of her deliverer, sobbing:

"Wilton, brother, defend me!"

"With my heart—with my heart's blood, Mary!" exclaimed the excited youth, pressing her convulsively to his manly breast; "defend thee, though thou never canst be mine!—defend thee, even for another!—defend thee, for the memory of that love which, like the blind man's dream, when o'er, left my young days in darkness! Villain!" he added, turning suddenly on the Puritan, "defend the life thy baseness has dishonoured!"

CHAPTER IV.

The eye's fierce glance, the heaving chest,
The swelling muscle, and the pliant limb,
Too well denote the hot encounter.

IT would have been a study for a painter to have watched the difference of expression in the countenances of Barford and the young Master of Wilton. The features of the former were distorted by baffled hate and the conflict of evil passions, while those of the latter were severely calm, as the avenging angel's brow, sent upon some errand of retributive justice. Barford fought with the mad fury of some hungry panther disappointed in its spring ; Wilton with that cool, steady courage which the consciousness of a good cause seldom fails to give. The green sward—Nature's soft carpet—was sadly trampled by the armed heels of the two combatants as they alternately stood on the attack or the defensive ; practising the feints, passes, and contre-thrusts of a now almost forgotten school, but common in those days, when the primer was replaced in the hand of youth by the rapier, and the master of fence was a more important personage than even the modern dancing-master.

Mary gazed on the encounter in breathless silence. With the intuitive perception of her sex, she felt how vast a stake depended on her protector's arm ; not life merely, but life's crown and amaranth flower—honour. Scant wonder, then, if, with eyes fascinated by terror, and rendered bold by despair, she watched the flashing of their well-tempered weapons as they swept through the air with a sound resembling a serpent's hiss.

Sir Malcolm Keinton, although wounded, had sufficient strength to follow the encounter with critical observation. It was long, very long, since he had assisted at a duel *à la mort*. The sound of the swords made music to the old man's ears, and he felt as excited as some amateur who finds himself suddenly plunged in the pursuit he had so passionately loved, but which age and infirmity had long since compelled him to resign.

"Well thrust !" he exclaimed, as the sword of Wilton passed so near to the breast of his adversary, that he only avoided a mortal blow by cleverly springing back. "Now then, the Flemish pass, and point again in tierce."

"Heaven !" murmured Mary ; "how fierce is man contending with his fellow-man !"

Still the combat raged with unabated fury. Barford was slightly wounded in his sword-arm, but maintained his ground with unabated energy, but less passion. The sight of his blood on Wilton's sword had made him prudent ; he stood more on the defensive.

"Nobly struck !" shouted the knight ; "down with the crop-

eared knave ! Ho, ho ! in stoccato ! Now point. Well done, brave boy, well done ! Antonio of Padua, my old master, could not have parried better Huzza ! God save King Charles !”

In making a lunge, Barford had thrown open his guard, and the rapier of the Master of Wilton penetrated his right side. He dropped his weapon from agony and weakness, and stood, defenceless and wounded, at the mercy of his antagonist.

“ Strike !” cried Sir Malcolm Keinton, “ and rid the world of a traitor !”

“ No,” said Wilton, after a moment’s pause, “ I cannot raise my sword to an unarmed man. Take thy life, Barford,” he added, contemptuously, “ and mend it, if thou canst.”

The Puritan stooped with pain, and raised his weapon. Fixing a look of unutterable hatred upon his conqueror, he muttered, or rather hissed through his teeth, as he fixed his red glaring eye upon him :

“ Master of Wilton, we shall meet again. Our quarrel ends not here. To Essex, to the Commons of England, will I denounce thy treason. For you, lady,” he added, fixing a glance upon his rescued victim, beneath which her heart grew sick, and her pale cheek more pale, “ my debt is postponed, not paid.”

With these words the baffled ravisher turned upon his heel, and, despite the faintness which stole over him from loss of blood, stalked sullenly away.

It was fortunate for the old knight and his child that the followers of Wilton soon afterwards reached the spot ; for in less than half an hour the Puritan, at the head of a party of his men, laden with the plunder of the burning manor-house, was on their track, his wound bound, and he impatient for revenge.

“ Arrest them,” he cried, “ in the name of the Commons of England !”

“ To your arms, men !” pronounced the young Puritan, sternly ; “ I am here by command of the general of the Parliament to stop this unnatural warfare. Have you forgotten that those who are our enemies in the field are brothers in their homes ? What,” he added, “ hath this good man done that you should attack his mansion like the stronghold of a thief—staining a noble cause by violence to women and grey hairs ?”

“ He is a malignant,” shouted Gobmouth, who, since the firing was over, had suddenly found himself very courageous ; a prelatical persecutor of God’s people, an enemy to their liberties ! Leave not the good work unfinished ! Down with them !”

The old knight, who had recovered his weapon, convulsively grasped the hilt. He longed to have a touch with some of them ; and there is no knowing how far his impotent fury, on hearing himself thus reviled, might have led him, had not his daughter clung round his neck and restrained him. He was too feeble from

the wound he had received, and loved her too tenderly to shake her off.

"Dogs!" he groaned, in the tempest of his indignation; "curs! rebels! vipers! whom I have fostered on my lands till you have lived to sting me!"

"Father, dear father!"

"I shall see you crouching again. The king will—must be victorious. An' he does not purge his kingdom of such scum, I will turn Roundhead myself."

"The king," said Wilton gravely to the old man, "has retired towards Oxford."

This was a blow so unexpected to Sir Malcolm, so out of his previous calculation, that he was silent.

"You hear the fiery old malignant?" exclaimed Barford.

The besieging party, finding that the Master of Wilton was supported by numbers which rendered resistance useless, despite the reproaches of Barford, began to draw off. They were anxious to secure the plunder they had already obtained; and their leader, like a baffled bloodhound, reluctantly followed them.

An attempt was immediately made to stop the progress of the flames, and save a portion, at least, of the noble mansion of Keinton from the flames. But the fire had obtained too great a head: the fine old hall was indeed preserved; but the wings and chapel were entirely destroyed.

Mary and her disconsolate parent seated themselves upon a bank in front of a lawn, watching the vain attempts made by Wilton's men to arrest the destroying element.

"Let it burn," said Sir Malcolm; "when my royal master is driven from his palace and his capital by rebels, the humblest of his servants should not complain."

"Father! father!" whispered his affectionate child, suppressing her own grief to soothe his; "let us be grateful that honour and life are spared. We can find another home to shelter our broken fortunes."

"But it will not be the home of my fathers," said the knight, passionately; "the home where I was born, hallowed by the tradition of centuries, endeared by memories of youth, honour, love, respect, and happiness."

The Master of Wilton, who overheard the old man's lament, begged he would retire to his mansion, whose comparatively modern gables were visible through the opening wood at the extreme end of the valley, and find a home there—at least for the present.

"Home!" repeated Sir Malcolm, petulantly; "at my age men find no second home. The green sapling may be transplanted, but not the gnarled oak; its roots have struck too deeply in the soil; you may hew down the tree, but not uproot it."

"At least," urged the young man, "till Keinton Manor can be restored. I shall not be there in person to play the host," he added, fixing his eyes mournfully upon Mary, seeing that she hesitated; "but will take sure means to watch over and protect you."

These words, which were intended more as a reply to the doubt of the fair girl than to her father's words, pained her generous heart. Rising from the bank, she hastily exclaimed, while tears dimmed her eyes:

"Yes, we will go, Richard. Where should my father seek a shelter but with the son of his adoption? Where should I go but to the *brother* of my childhood—the friend of my earliest years?"

"Thy brother," replied Wilton gravely, kissing the hand which trembled in his grasp, "will not prove himself unworthy of the trust."

At this moment a horseman was seen dashing madly across the path. The keen eye of Mary recognised him in a moment. Clasping her hands together, she mentioned the name of Herbert. The Master of Wilton turned sorrowfully away, not to witness a meeting which would have pained him.

It were a twice-told tale to paint the transports of lovers who meet after long absence, or escape from danger. From any other lips than Mary's the young Lord of Stanfield might have felt jealous of the lavish praise bestowed upon the generous conduct of the Master of Wilton—praise which, despite the gratitude he felt for the preservation of her who was most dear to him, he envied the young Puritan; for he had earned it by performing a duty he would have challenged as his own peculiar right against the world.

"You are silent, Herbert," observed Mary; "surely you are not jealous that Richard Wilton came to my service in such a fearful strait? No, no! Pardon me," she added; "the supposition is unworthy your nature."

"Not jealous, Mary," replied the young man, sadly, "but grieved that any other hand than mine should have chastised this outrage on your father and yourself—that another should have had the bliss of protecting you."

"Herbert!"

"I know what you would say," continued her lover. "I own Wilton's worth—his courage, virtues, and forbearance. Were we not friends? Not in the holiday parlance of the world's butterflies, but really friends; men who compared their thoughts together, as misers show their treasures—men who have but one heart between them."

"And I have severed you," observed Mary, mournfully.

At this moment Wilton returned, after having seen the flames of the old mansion partially extinguished, and such pictures and

household treasures as could be saved carefully collected, in order to be conveyed to his own house for safety.

"How can I offer thanks," exclaimed Herbert, extending his hand, "for your generous friendship and protection to these dear ones?"

"By silence and forgiveness," replied the Puritan.

"Forgiveness!" repeated the lover; "for what?"

"For having forestalled you in your dearest privilege—protection to the being who has given you her heart and her heart's love. Remember," he added, "that it was but the advantage of a brother's care."

The lovers understood by these simple words, and more from the melancholy expression with which they were uttered, that the speaker announced the resignation of the hopes he had cherished from boyhood—the dreams of his manhood, the fading of the presiding star of his existence; for such natures as his never love but once.

Sir Malcolm yielded to the entreaties of the two friends, and consented to be conveyed to Wilton Hall, the seat of his preserver. Just as they had laid him upon the rude litter, hastily constructed of boughs of trees and fragments of half-burnt tapestry torn from the ruined walls, a figure, black with toil and smoke, broke through the crowd which surrounded the old man, and kneeling by the litter, kissed his hand. It was the faithful huntsman.

"Welcome, old Fidelity!" said the knight, with a faint smile. "We have seen the last of Keinton Manor."

"But not of its knightly owner," replied Martin, "or his noble race. Walls may be rebuilt, trees will grow again; but that fair shoot lopped," he added, pointing to his young mistress, "and Keinton were indeed a desert."

His master grasped his hand with a warmth which, in other years and under other circumstances, it would have humbled him to express, for he was a proud though generous gentleman; but he felt the consolation which the speaker's quaint simile conveyed. What was, indeed, the ruin of his home, compared to the misfortune the honest fellow alluded to—the loss of his darling Mary?

"Thank Heaven," murmured the old knight, clasping his hands in prayer, "that I am still a father!"

It was night before the party arrived at Wilton House. Sir Malcolm was conveyed to the chamber of his host, and his wound, which was merely a flesh one, dressed by the huntsman.

"Sleep, and a few days' rest," he observed, as he tied the last bandage with a hand as gentle as a child's, "and your honour may walk to Northwood End to see the hounds throw off again."

The poor fellow blushed as his young lady raised his hand, before he was aware of her intention, to her lips, to thank him for his

fidelity to her father. At that moment, despite the preachings of Master Gobmouth and the lectures of his better half, who was deeply tinctured with the Puritanical fanaticism of the day, he felt that he could take arms against the Parliamentarians. In burning Keinton they had lost all favour in his eyes. The injury to his master became, by some incomprehensible process, identified with the cause of the king. Martin, who had never been in heart a Roundhead, was now almost as staunch a Royalist as the knight himself.

"It will be many a long day before the dogs throw off at Northwood Point again," sighed Sir Malcolm; "our grandchildren may live to see them, but we never shall."

By the advice of his leech, whose orders were received with as much respect as though he had taken his degree, and was licensed by the goodly Company of Barber-Surgeons to kill or cure men, all but his daughter retired from the chamber. She remained watching with filial love by the side of his couch.

As soon as Herbert and Wilton were alone, the former would have renewed the protestations of his gratitude, had not his friend prevented him.

"Not a word—not a word. Remember," he said, "what our old companion, the noble Milton, observed to us the day we planted the mulberry tree at the back of Christ's College together. Have you forgotten the lines speaking of the heart?"

"No, nor ever shall," replied the young man, repeating them :

Strange that a thing of dust should thus control
The energies of an immortal soul :
That a pure, subtle essence should obey,
And mind be governed by mere common clay.'

"We had happy days then, Wilton," he added.

"And shall have again," said the Puritan, warmly; "this unnatural contest cannot last long; civil commotions, like the struggle of the heart, in time exhaust themselves. Our country and our friends will once again know peace."

"Which side hath the poet taken?" demanded the Royalist.

"Milton hath been true to his own nature, and sided with the suffering and oppressed; his energies and pen are devoted to the people."

"A noble cause in theory, although a mistaken one in practice."

"Let us not discuss the question. You have followed the instinct of your birth, the traditions of your race. Your ancestors sleep beneath their many escutcheoned tombs; mine 'neath the humble turf, which, osier-bound, marks their humble graves. It is as natural for you to be a Royalist as for me to be a——"

"Republican," added Herbert, finishing the sentence for him.

"Not a Republican, but a patriot."

The following morning news arrived that the king had broken up his camp, and was slowly marching towards Oxford. The country, consequently, round Keinton and Wilton House remained in possession of the Puritans, a circumstance which rendered the stay of the young Knight of Stanfield no less dangerous to himself than his host, as strict orders were given by Essex to arrest all stragglers from the Royal army.

It would therefore have been as unwise as ungenerous to have drawn attention on the home which had so hospitably sheltered those who were so dear to him.

"We must part," exclaimed Mary, who, woman-like, found in the hour of need the resolution which her lover wanted to pronounce the hard word; "farewell! You leave me under the guardianship of the truest, noblest friend, one who will prove a brother to my helplessness. I shall be safe—quite safe here. It is you," she added, "who must face danger and captivity, by making your way through the lines of the enemy, like some hunted deer, alone."

"Not alone," said Wilton; "I shall accompany him."

A look of gratitude, which sent the warm blood thrilling through his veins, was the maiden's answer.

"And I," said old Martin, who was in the room. "I know each turn and hiding-place in the county. The best bloodhound of them all would be puzzled to double with me. If my arm is weak, my head is clear; and neither arm nor head can be better employed than in assuring the safety of Sir Herbert."

It was finally settled that the fugitive, escorted by Martin and the Master of Wilton, should leave the house at nightfall. Then the host called the old huntsman from the room, and left the lovers to themselves, under pretence of making arrangements for their journey; but in reality to allow them a brief hour to soothe the pangs of separation by a renewal of those vows which young hearts feed upon; perhaps, also, to spare himself the pain of witnessing them.

"Mary!" exclaimed the young man, fondly pressing her to his heart, "how soon has the sunshine of our love been clouded! I am degraded—forced to fly, like a vile hind, by night, from those whom I should scorn to turn from in the field—to leave you, too, with—"

"A brother, and your friend; a noble, generous friend," interrupted the enthusiastic girl. "Oh, Herbert, be more just to your own nature, and Wilton's matchless worth!"

"Dost blame me that I fear to lose my treasure?" he demanded. "The miser, who, by a life of pain, has gained and lost a priceless hoard—the wave-tossed mariner, who sees the prize of years of toil and pain rent rudely from him, feel not half the agony I feel at quitting thee."

"But not a doubt, Herbert," said the maiden, "not a doubt of Wilton's faith or mine?"

"No," said the young man; "for to doubt either were to doubt Heaven."

As soon as night had thrown her mantle o'er the sleeping earth, Herbert and his two companions prepared to set forth upon their journey. All three were armed to the teeth, and carried pistols in the holsters of their saddles.

Their adieu to Sir Malcolm Keinton had been previously made, and nothing remained but to bid farewell to his lovely heiress.

"God bless you, Herbert," she exclaimed, speaking in a low, soft tone, lest the vibrations of her voice should betray the emotion of heart. "I need not tell you to be careful of your life; you will do that for my sake. Remember," she added, fixing her eyes upon him, "it is the thread of mine."

The Knight of Stanfield dared not trust himself to reply. Twining his arm round her waist, he pressed her passionately to his breast, and for the first time printed a kiss upon her unresisting lips.

The Master of Wilton, despite his resolution, turned aside to conceal the tear which fell upon his cheek; that kiss seemed to fall like a drop of molten wax upon his heart, and set the seal upon his misery.

"Farewell," said the blushing girl, extending her hand towards Wilton; "you will soon bring me back intelligence of Herbert's safety?"

"I will send it, lady," replied Wilton, as with trembling lips he touched her taper fingers. "But the present danger past, I will make the best of my way to the camp of Essex, and return no more."

"No more!" repeated the maiden.

"At least," added the young man, "till the wars are over. But fear not—I have taken every precaution for your safety. Your name and your father's well-known loyalty will protect you from the Royalists. My name and home will shelter you, should the people triumph in the struggle. Believe me, lady, that all who have drawn the sword in this unhappy struggle on the nation's side are not like Barford."

It was impossible not to feel the delicacy which urged this resolution. Herbert heard it, despite his high opinion of his friend, with secret satisfaction, and Mary with a tender sadness. She felt that his unhappy love had banished him from his home while she remained there.

That young Puritan possessed a noble heart. Herbert was right, when he said to his mistress in the garden of Keinton that he was worthy of a woman's love.

Fortunately for the fugitives, the night was dark and lowering, and not a sound fell upon their ears. Suddenly Martin, who led

the way, drew rein and paused till the two friends were by his side.

"Hush!" whispered the huntsman, bending his head to the saddle-bow and listening; "yes, I am right—horsemen are before us."

"I hear nothing," said Wilton, who had been listening too.

"Had you been out, Master of Wilton," replied the old man, respectfully, "as many nights as I have, both as boy and man, for thirty years, stopping the foxes' holes against the next day's chase, you would be able to distinguish the slightest sound. There again!" he added; "there are several—five, I should say, at least. We must avoid them."

"They may be friends."

"Few friends in a wood at midnight, and in times like these. We must ride wide to outflank them."

Forcing his powerful nag through the brushwood, the speaker turned to the right of the valley, followed by his two companions, who had only the rustling of the fern and brake to guide them as the steed of Martin trampled them down with his heavy hoof. Pursuing their way in this manner for about a couple of miles, they broke ground again upon an open heath, leaving the wood behind them.

"Where are we?" said Herbert.

"On Goosefeeder's Land," replied the Master of Wilton, who knew the country well. "To the right lies the Monk's Stone; 'tis a wild spot."

"Wild or not, we must pass it," interrupted Martin.

"But why is it called the Monk's Stone?" inquired the young Lord of Stanfield.

"This is not the time or place to tell it," interrupted their guide, who, like many of the humbler classes in England, was inclined to superstition; "those may hear us who will regret to all eternity that they ever made a compact at the fatal spot. It is the demon's altar," he added. "Ride on! ride on!"

These words only increased the curiosity of the young man, and he again requested his friend to relate to him the legend; which, as Wilton was entirely free from superstitious fears, he assented to.

"As you please," said the huntsman; "but I at least will ride out of hearing. Master of Wilton," he added, "it is a tempting of Providence by a tale like that."

Putting spurs to his horse, the speaker made head a short way before them.

"You have heard the name of Breakspear?" began the narrator.

"What, Walter Breakspear? He who, under the name of Adrian, filled the Papal chair?"

"The same."

"Who has not?" demanded Herbert; "whatever his failings as

a priest, he was glorious as a man. He was one of the first of the Roman pontiffs who conceived the generous idea of driving the barbarians from Italy, and restoring political freedom to that lovely land."

" You are aware, then, he was an Englishman ? "

" A poor monk of Canterbury—despised and ill-treated by his superiors. Go on."

" 'Tis said that when driven from his convent he wandered to these parts, a friendless, houseless, wretched man, no hospitable door opened to receive him—the rejected and despised of all. Even the poor, who are generally touched by distress, of which they know the bitter pangs from sad experience, barred their wretched huts against him."

" Why so ? "

" The ban of the Church was on him. They knew by his rent cowl, and the absence of the scapulary, that he was an expelled priest from some religious house, so even the poor shrank from him in terror."

" What had been his crime ? " demanded Herbert.

" Knowledge. He had broken through the tradition of ages, and dared to think for himself—to use the reason God had endowed him with. If we may believe tradition, he was no less expert as a chemist than as a mathematician ; in philosophy he had broken through the trammels of the Syllogistic school, and, like Abelard in France, or our first Bacon in England, broached truths in science which bigots denounced as errors in religion. Vainly did he represent to his superiors the glory which would accrue to the Church in taking the lead in a movement which would revolutionise the world ; vainly impress upon them that truth, like time, was eternal ; and that the mountain which ignorance and superstition had piled upon her fair breast, if not removed by the hand of progress, would be overturned by the convulsion of the earthquake. The purple drones either felt that the chain would last their time, or were unable to comprehend him ; he was pronounced a dangerous innovator, imprisoned, and finally driven from his retirement : their hate pursued him even in his banishment."

" Truly," observed Herbert, " has it been said that few men hate like priests. Fanaticism is always dangerous."

" Within a small volume, in the dreary hours of his imprisonment, he had contrived to trace his speculations in religion, discoveries in science, and schemes for the improved condition and education of mankind. The characters, it is said, were traced in his blood, ink having been denied him.

" Vainly the expelled priest had appealed from abbot to bishop, bishop to primate. All feared the man they could not understand, and hated the intelligence which reproved them. He wandered

from monastery to palace, from town to village, rejected and scorned by all ; till at last, it is said, with his heart filled with bitterness and gall, on a night like this, when the heavens were obscured, and the distant thunder threatened a convulsion of nature, he laid himself down to die by the half-extinguished ashes of a fire which some shepherds had lighted at the foot of what was then called the Druids' Stone.

" Aware of the evil reputation of the outcast, one of the rustics concealed himself in the branches of a solitary pine, in which the raven had built her nest, and whose tall branches shadowed the gibbet where a murderer's bones were rattling in the wind. It is from him the tradition has descended that a phantom appeared to the wanderer, and offered him the highest honours the world could bestow, on condition that he destroyed his book, and that, when he had fulfilled his promise, he would grant him any favour he should ask.

" The compact was made, and the outcast Breakspear ascended the Papal throne. Years rolled on. The same peasant, who had been received into a religious house, of which he had become prior, was sent by his Order on a mission to Rome, touching the dispute for supremacy between the sees of York and Canterbury. He was well received by his countryman the new pontiff, and lodged in the Vatican. The affair was arranged to the honour and satisfaction of the see of Canterbury, and the messenger taking his private audience of leave, when a tall, stately-looking man, dressed in a robe which, without being the costume of any order of the Church, had a sacerdotal character, entered the cabinet of his holiness, who with difficulty restrained his indignation at so daring and unwarranted an intrusion.

" 'Holy father, you were less fastidious thirty years since, when, at the foot of the Druids' Stone, I made a purchase from you.'

" This was uttered with a sneer so cold and so sarcastic that it froze even the haughty spirit of Adrian. The poor prior remembered immediately the fearful personage. He crossed himself and trembled.

" 'Another time,' faltered the pontiff, looking extremely pale.

" 'No time like the present. Hast thou forgotten thy promise, made in the rags and wretchedness from which my pity raised them—when thou hadst reached the height of human greatness, to accord me one demand ?'

" 'A demand !' repeated the terror-stricken Pope.

" 'Dost thou deny it, fool, because I made no written compact with thee ? Thinkest thou to escape thy promise to me ? It was traced in fire—on rocks older than this globe thou breathest on. Besides, I have a living witness, this shaveling, and I adjure him by his priesthood to declare if I have not spoken truth.'

" 'Alas, holy father !' exclaimed the prior, thus solemnly called

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